



# Made of What?

## A Collection of Tokens Made from Landmarks

by Kevin Lester

Throughout the history of exonomia, there have been many tokens and medals made from well-known landmarks.

### **A TOKEN MADE FROM THE U.S.S. SOUTH DAKOTA**

A medal was made partly from the U.S.S. South Dakota. This particular token was made from brass.

The New York Ship Building Corp. began construction of the USS South Dakota, also known as “Battleship X” on July 5, 1939 in Camden, New Jersey. She was the lead ship of her class of 35,000-ton battleships and on June 7, 1941, she was launched. On March 20, 1942, she was commissioned with Capt. Thomas L. Gatch in command.

In August of 1942, she was transferred to the Pacific. On October 26, 1942, she was hit by a Japanese bomb, damaging her forward sixteen-inch gun during the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands before colliding with the USS Mahan while also attempting to avoid a submarine. Damage from both incidents was repaired locally before going back to battle.

After another battle against the Japanese, her radar was damaged, and she received many hits from the Japanese. She was given basic repairs in order to be seaworthy before she sailed to New York for more repairs.

After 40 days, she left New York and was assigned to the North Atlantic. In December 1943, she joined 5 other battleships in bombarding the Marshall Islands.

On May 15, 1944, a Japanese plane dropped a 500lb bomb onto the South Dakota but did little

damage to the ship's ability to operate. She was overhauled at Puget Sound before once again returning to Pearl Harbor.

She then helped fast carriers with strikes in Tokyo and Iwo Jima. While in the process of rearming, an explosion in one turret killed 11, and she sailed to Leyte for repairs. Her last action in war was helping with strikes against northern Tokyo on August 15, 1945.

She then sailed to the west coast of the United States. On January 3, 1946, she sailed to Philadelphia for an overhaul and was assigned to the Atlantic Reserve Fleet in June. On January 31, 1947, she was decommissioned.

On June 1, 1962, she was removed from the Navy list before being sold for scrap on the 25th.

During her life, this remarkable ship was given a total of 13 battle stars.



*Medal made partly from U.S.S. South Dakota*

### **A TOKEN MADE FROM THE CONSTELLATION**

Tokens were made that were struck from copper spikes from the U.S. Frigate Constellation.

On March 27, 1794, George Washington signed a law to reestablish our Navy after the Revolutionary War. This authorized the creation of 6 frigates, including the Constitution and the original Constellation.

The original USS Constellation was launched at Sterrett Shipyard in Baltimore on September 7 of 1797. She engaged a French Frigate in 1799 near the islands of Saint Kitts and Nevis. On February 1, 1800, she engaged another French frigate for five hours. She became blockaded during the War of 1812 while being repaired.

She also helped capture an Algerian frigate during the Second Barbary War. In 1853 she was disassembled.

But that was not the end of this historical ship- rumor has it that some of the wood from her was used to build a smaller sloop by the same name, which is now residing in Baltimore.





*Medal made from copper spikes from the 2nd Constellation, made around 1955*



**T**HE history of the U. S. Frigate CON-  
STELLATION closely parallels that of our nation.  
She was the first ship of the New Republic to  
put to sea fully equipped and manned. It was  
the training of her crew of 220 seamen and 40  
marines, and the institution of gunnery prac-  
tice under Captain Truxtun that gave him the  
title of "the Father of the United States Navy"  
and made the CONSTELLATION its birth-  
place.

After the Revolutionary War such naval  
forces as existed were disbanded, for Congress  
did not deem the expense necessary. But by 1794  
American shipping was being preyed upon by  
the Barbary States: Tripoli, Tunisia, Algeria and  
Morocco, and Congress authorized the building  
of a small navy. President George Washington  
chose Joshua Humphreys, naval architect of  
Philadelphia, to design the ships. Six frigates  
were ordered, the CONSTELLATION and  
CONGRESS of 36 guns and the UNITED  
STATES, PRESIDENT, CHESAPEAKE and  
CONSTITUTION of 44 guns each. The first  
ship laid down was the CONSTELLATION.  
She was built at Samuel and Joseph Sterett's  
shipyard in Baltimore with David Stodder,  
builder, and Captain Thomas Truxtun in com-  
mand of the operation.

By 1796 the frigate had taken shape on the  
ways and the newspapers of the day tell of the  
constant stream of visitors who went to Fell's  
Point across from Fort McHenry to view this  
enormous wooden ship, a hundred and seventy  
feet long and forty wide. She was launched on  
September 7, 1797 amid great fanfare. During

her launching every signal to the workmen was  
given by the ruffle of a drum, for she was under  
control of the War Department—the U. S. Navy  
was soon to be born.

Months were required to rig and outfit the  
vessel. At last Captain Truxtun received his  
commission and on June 24, 1798, the CON-  
STELLATION put to sea. Her first assign-  
ment was the convoying of a group of 60 mer-  
chantmen along the coast. After this "shake-  
down" she was dispatched to the West Indies  
which were infested by French Privateers that  
preyed on American shipping. There the CON-  
STELLATION defeated and captured her first  
warship, L'INSURGENTE, the pride of the  
French navy; so thrashed the 56 gun LA VEN-  
GEANCE that she later sank; and from her great  
speed gained the nick-name "The Yankee Race-  
Horse."

During the War of 1812, the CONSTELLA-  
TION was blockaded in Chesapeake Bay by  
the British Fleet. Nevertheless, she took the  
principal lead in the engagement at Craney  
Island where a British attempt at invasion was  
repulsed with the loss of 8 gunboats and 410  
men. Again she fought the Barbary Pirates in  
the Mediterranean in 1815, leading a group of  
four American vessels in capturing the 46 gun  
frigate MASHUDA; sailed around the world,  
calling at ports in China and Hawaii, paving  
the way for the "Open Door Policy" and an-  
nexation of the Territory of Hawaii; captured  
the brigs DELICIA and TRITON, and the  
bark CORA in the slave trade off the coast of  
Africa; was active during the Civil War in the  
Mediterranean and the Gulf of Mexico; took  
relief supplies to Ireland during the famine of  
1880; served as a training ship at Newport and  
the U. S. Naval Academy; and concluded her  
active service as flagship of the Atlantic fleet  
during World War II. She has been in commis-  
sion longer than any other ship of the U. S.  
Navy. Today, still basically sound and original,  
she displays more service ribbons than any other  
warship.

*Informational paper with information on the first Constellation*



## U. S. Frigate "Constellation"



## Souvenir Medals Struck From Navy's First Ship

### *Good For Lifetime Admission to Frigate*

Thousands of special copper medals, newly-minted from parts of the United States Frigate "Constellation", now berthed in Baltimore, will provide lifetime free admission to the Navy's oldest vessel for the fortunate owners.

The medals, struck from copper spikes used in the original construction of the ship in Baltimore in 1797, are being used to raise funds nationally for the restoration work required to put the "Constellation" in original condition. The medals are being distributed on the basis of one for each dollar donated.

Every dollar raised by this means will go towards replacing deteriorated planking, frames, masts, bulwarks and the hundreds of other items needed so that the "Constellation" can remain afloat and take her rightful place as a national shrine.

Completed several months before the famous U.S.F. "Constitution", the "Constellation" saw action on numerous occasions during the 18th and early 19th Century. She remained on the Navy's active list until 1955, and during World War II was the flagship of the Atlantic Fleet. A stout link with our heritage, the "Constellation's" preservation is felt to be a national responsibility.

Donations of a dollar, or multiples of a dollar, which will make the restoration possible, should be made to:

**"Constellation", Baltimore, Md.**

"CONSTELLATION"  
BALTIMORE, MD.

I enclose \$..... to help restore the United States  
Frigate "Constellation". In return please send me.....  
"Constellation" medals.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State.....

This pamphlet was produced at no cost to the "Constellation" Committee. The following firms and individuals kindly donated time, labor and material for its preparation:

Artist: Edward L. Christle, Tower Building, Baltimore

Photostats: Baltimore Photo & Blue Print Co., 211 E. Baltimore St., Balto.

Typography: The Linotype Composition Co., 407 E. Saratoga St., Baltimore

Paper: John Floyd Paper Co., Inc., 2330 N. Warwick Ave., Baltimore

Printing: The Charles B. DeVilbiss Co., 411 E. Saratoga St., Baltimore 2, Md.

Order form from 1950s for the tokens, falsely claiming spikes were from 1797 ship rather than the 1855 ship, according to [www.coinworld.com/news/precious-metals/research-matters-1955-medals-claim-of-origin-.html](http://www.coinworld.com/news/precious-metals/research-matters-1955-medals-claim-of-origin-.html)

## **A TOKEN MADE FROM THE STATUE OF LIBERTY**

Sears Roebuck and Company made a token using actual material removed during the restoration process of the Statue of Liberty.

The Statue of Liberty stands tall on Liberty Island in New York. In 1865, a French historian suggested building a statue to commemorate the friendship of the United States and France. In 1875, construction began in France, and was made of copper on steel supports.

On July 4, 1884, the statue was presented to the American minister to France in Paris before being disassembled and shipped to New York City. On October 28, 1886, President Grover Cleveland dedicated the statue on its pedestal.

In 1986, the statue was repaired by both French and American workers as part of a centennial celebration.

These tokens both commemorated the second century of Sears Roebuck and Company and the 100th anniversary of the Statue of Liberty. They were made of actual material from the statue.



*Token issued by Sears to celebrate the 2nd century of Sears and the 100th anniversary of the Statue of Liberty*

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

"1986- 'Sears' Statue of Liberty Token." *Collectors Weekly*, [www.collectorsweekly.com/stories/119117-1986--sears-statue-of-liberty-token](http://www.collectorsweekly.com/stories/119117-1986--sears-statue-of-liberty-token).

Administrator. "History of USS South Dakota." *USS South Dakota*, [www.usssouthdakota.com/index.php/history-in-brief](http://www.usssouthdakota.com/index.php/history-in-brief).

The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Statue of Liberty." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 31 July 2020, [www.britannica.com/topic/Statue-of-Liberty](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Statue-of-Liberty).

“The Fates of the Six Frigates Created by the Naval Act of 1794.” *The Sextant*, 27 Mar. 2019, [usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/2019/03/27/the-fates-of-the-six-frigates-created-by-the-naval-act-of-1794/](https://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/2019/03/27/the-fates-of-the-six-frigates-created-by-the-naval-act-of-1794/).

Graff, Richard. “Research Matters: 1955 Medal’s Claim of Origin Inaccurate.” *CoinWorld*, 2 Aug. 2012, 8PM, [www.coinworld.com/news/precious-metals/research-matters-1955-medals-claim-of-origin-.html](http://www.coinworld.com/news/precious-metals/research-matters-1955-medals-claim-of-origin-.html).

“South Dakota (BB 57).” *Naval History and Heritage Command*, [www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/us-navy-ships/battleships/south-dakota-bb-57.html](http://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/us-navy-ships/battleships/south-dakota-bb-57.html).

“Token - Sears Celebrating 100 Years Statue of Liberty, \* Tokens \*.” *Numista*, [en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces25402.html](http://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces25402.html).

*USS Constellation (Frigate), 1797-1853*, [www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmusn/explore/photography/ships-us/ships-usn-c/uss-constellation-frigate-1797-1853.html](http://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmusn/explore/photography/ships-us/ships-usn-c/uss-constellation-frigate-1797-1853.html).

“USS Constellation.” *Historic Ships in Baltimore*, [historicships.org/explore/uss-constellation](http://historicships.org/explore/uss-constellation).

“USS South Dakota (BB-57) Battleship.” *Battleship*, [www.militaryfactory.com/ships/detail.asp?ship\\_id=USS-South-Dakota-BB57](http://www.militaryfactory.com/ships/detail.asp?ship_id=USS-South-Dakota-BB57).

*USS South Dakota (BB-57), 1942-1947*, [www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmusn/explore/photography/ships-us/ships-usn-s/uss-south-dakota-bb-57.html](http://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmusn/explore/photography/ships-us/ships-usn-s/uss-south-dakota-bb-57.html).